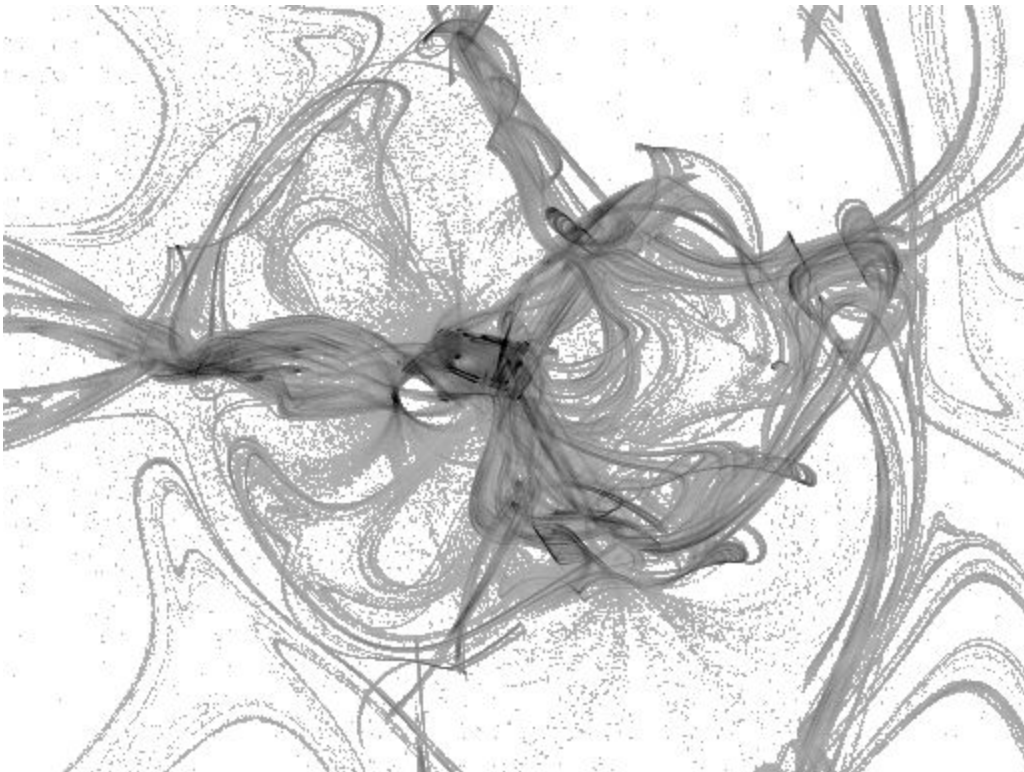


*puppet psalms*

by

jesse glass



xPress(ed)

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## Dedication

With love to Rod "Rave" Summers, Tom "Bob" Winter, John M. Bennett, Arturas Bumsteinas, Gryte, Nicodemus, Charles Krutzen, Els and Jukka-Pekka. May the puppets continue to gnaw at their strings!

## Mayakovsky Is Dead

*Where's the joint of Nita Joe?  
Nita's joint is just below!*

Mayakovsky knew  
that bullets turn to poetry  
in Bagdadi Russia between dusk and dawn.  
He thought perhaps in Moscow it was the same.  
He also knew to get ahead  
he had to catch the fame train early.

BUT

first he wondered where to aim his Poetry Gun—  
down his throat maybe?  
Should he suck the bullet out?  
Draw on it like a clit?  
Should he wrap his tongue around the barrel thinking  
Lenin? Stalin? Choke the death seed down hoping  
that it breaks the spine w/ an incredibly sweet snap?  
Should he perhaps aim it at his brow  
ready to begin the revolution at the count of three?

1,2...

Mayakovsky wished his gun were bigger  
for his pistol shrank each time he pulled the trigger.

Should a man write odes about Ford trucks? Ask  
Mayakovsky who says:  
"Forget your 'Wooden Russia' w/ candles scorching the Madonna's double chin!  
We have new cars to race, new enemies to wrestle!  
The celestial timer is ticking, Citizens! Here is the hammer and here is the steel.  
Strike quickly and a rocket will rise like a prayer  
to shatter on tomorrow's perfect streets!

Point your Poetry Gun in the air:  
bang! bang! bang! Comrade.  
The moon steams on its rails over the Urals.  
I love you like a one-legged soldier  
loves his leg, Babushka.

Wicked Paris woman waiting on the bed,  
would you care to conceive good Russian sons?

NO!

Aim your gun Mayakovsky:

BANG:

Gobble your pineapple,  
Chew at your grouse,  
Your last day is coming, you bourgeoisie louse.

We celebrate radios, aeroplanes, hammer on iron,  
iron bent in the shape of a woman, Cubist paintings,  
Charleston, Fox Trot, Negro jazz.  
Why?...Because!...Exactly!...Citizens, listen  
to this important announcement:

Hard-hearted Hannah  
The Vamp of Savannah  
The Vamp of Savannah  
Gee-ay.

Workers forward! Factories in place of museums!  
The tire recapper's sweating dance is more beautiful  
than the arabesques of 1000 Nijinskies!

Mayakovsky points his gun  
at the lion-colored clouds.  
Points his silver-triggered gun  
at mother tundra, father taiga.  
Aims his six-shooter under the table,  
"Let's see them cards!"  
he yells at Carl Sandburg. Marinetti  
marvels  
at Mayakovsky's markmanship:  
how magnificent  
manifestations of tomorrow manifest themselves in myriads  
from Mayakovsky's magnetic manipulations.

Q. Why did Mayakovsky cross Red Square?

A. To get to the other side.

Q. What's Blok and white and red all over?

A. Mayakovsky.

//

O you shootnik, shoot it out!  
O you shootnik, shoot it forth!

You who shoot both up and down  
Shoot along so shootingly  
Shoot it off dynamically.  
Shooter of the shooting shootniks, overshoot the shootathons!  
Aimer of Poetic Pistols, countershoot the Kingdom's shots!  
Bangio! Crackio!  
Discharge, recharge, chargelets, banglelets,  
Aim your Pistol high and low.

O you shootnik, shoot it out!  
O you shootnik, shoot it forth!

//

Mayakovsky admires himself even now.  
Mayakovsky was Billy the Kid in another incarnation.  
Mayakovsky eternally wins the race.

Mayakovsky signs and countersigns.  
Mayakovsky is not jealous of Gorky, or Pasternak; neither  
is he awed by Tolstoi. He handles official matters  
with the deft touch of any Rimsky-Korsakov.

"Hand me another, and quickly!" roars Mayakovsky.  
Mayakovsky met Sophocles in Hell the other night. They  
dropped their eyes and advanced w/ clenched fists. We  
were waiting for a confrontation. The air was electrified  
w/ suppressed emotion. Sophocles spat in Mayakovsky's face...  
This was the first and only time we've seen Mayakovsky back down from a fight.

//

His HEART was a 50,000 pound boiler ready to rupture.

His GUN was a wolf w/ circular teeth.

His HEART was a smiling athlete strolling along a sandy beach.

His GUN was a pimply man w/ nowhere to go.

His HEART was a unicycle the size of an explosion.

His GUN was built of interlocking contradictions.

His HEART screamed down at his groin: "Get me some air!"

His GUN grew split hooves and chased magpies in the thickets.

His HEART was a long-fingered woman w/ her hair tied in knots.

His GUN pounded its fist and wanted to know the reason why.

### BULLET

like a young hound tasting blood  
for the first time.

You rest now in a scarlet castle awaiting the Master's key.  
What poems did Mayakovsky think of then? Did he, like Esenin, have the sense  
to write them down? And how many factories gave mandatory overtime  
ON THAT WONDERFUL DAY?

Ring of fish

mirror in the center

--Theater Trap--

Stand near the sea

collect sunlight  
collect moonlight

circling gulls

wasps rolling balls of grit

feathers, twists of wood

Photograph the process

Step in the circle  
step in the circle  
step in the circle

Iron ring

Revolt against form, of course

The horrid biting flies

step in the circle while the forms still hold

& the spirit, still electric, moves in waves

through the elastic fish & entropy creeps near

koch island  
siemborski gasket

snake's head  
struck off w/a hoe  
whispers  
till sunset

sunlight seen thru the flesh of the hand

Close the hand  
on your own pulse--

--Theater Trap--

## *Written on Hell Money*

"Coffins or feet?"--  
There is a proverb that begins  
"define the unalloyed:  
essence of Oneness..."  
(what a pity!  
things never come back  
but turn beneath a thunder head  
—white & white & white)  
what a pity!  
this split foot—smash it apart  
then sleep behind a stick  
in freezing weather.  
I'll never come back  
but keep strolling down  
a speckled pig's life span,  
a dint on a microform cloud.  
(wind tangible as stone beads  
wrapped around the thumb  
promotes a fine oblivion)  
I'm rolling dice now  
so "feelings won't get hurt"  
I'm pulverizing light  
to "promote international understanding"  
the sound a worm makes in a nut  
before it chews free  
is your reading this.



## *Zamzumim Songs*

*In memory of Ann*

1.

You danced the darkling beetles at their work  
the water strider nibbling the dark  
then pulled all shadows to you  
& you walked  
the marble ramparts shielding the dead

(what daedal worker framed  
these scooped & tented motions  
in the earth?)

You hymned Zamzumim Songs;  
Blake's rigid hand  
knocked against your breast.  
Like him you could not breathe; you sawed  
your serrate voice within a granite notch  
till all came clear. The garden of your lungs  
drew in the clean, the lunar, and the good  
& you collapsed--a spectacle to stars  
& Angels in tall dust  
& Seeds.

Chorus

Where did our children go?  
--gliding on the air--  
they rose from their single foot  
& kicked free of the floor

They swept a cerulean sky  
with explosion-patterned wings  
then fell on a winnowed field  
& disavowed our names

& grew beyond our likeness  
pinched upon the Letter;  
they spat our breath from their mouths  
& toed the clean meander  
that takes the Self from the Self.

2.

You traced the brontic gardens  
in the clouds  
(black pillars of Babylonian scud)  
lightning sprawled  
cuincunxially down

Trees of fire & trees of dust  
meshed root & branch in a hieroglyph  
that forced the louvers of the sky apart

& all was as the Days of Noah: slant  
rain sank the origami swans;  
lathered streets grew syke & voe

& runnels from a planisphere  
broke the snap beans in their crescent sheaths  
bruised the grapes for the second sin  
sheared the tenons from the mortises.

*Chorus.*

3.

The whales struck up a vortex/  
instantly  
you threw your hoyden shadow  
deeply there;  
a boulder propped one rhomboid cheek  
against the tide--  
you anchored feet  
within the liquid mud  
& spun upon yourself to see  
the union of the land and sea:  
Cusa's interlocking cones,  
the dance of doubles  
for the watching herons.

*Chorus.*

4. Coda.

May Love precede us in the wondering town  
with a long stick, may it knock at every door,  
& coax the pigeons and the people down.

From their sealed towers, may they step  
once again upon the blasted earth,  
& dance where the lizard and the serpent slept.

## *Puppet Psalm I: Blokes On Film*

Man is a phantom contained in a circle of steel. Agate & jade

spring-driven cogs

drive him relentlessly forward to Judgment.

He will strive to dance upon

hands powered by concealed counterbalances

at the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, & 4<sup>th</sup> gates

& he will contrive to cast an image of himself in lead

even at the 49<sup>th</sup>

& go upon rolling, transmigrative wheels assuming

varieties of pneuma & form from death to death

Tape (Robotic Voice):

automaton, marionette

Blokes on film

obey the force of the

upward pull

as if thinking of Matter only;

on the other hand we must agree

such sentiments were not unknown in ancient China

beyond the stage of the mechanical

"Jumping lover"

who has "no moment to be merry."

grotesque adjunct

glorified toys;

on the other hand we must disagree

"forcibly pulling & jerking them back"

vectors of power

Blokes on film

sleeping–sleeping–sleep

sleep–etc.

& hopped-up prayers

in cars by a highway

that few, or none, may cross & return to tell.

Voice:

in the stone called chaos Man will see a violin attacked by a lion

in the stone called guilt Man will see a woman's face

chewing the light away, (a calcite tumor

extends from her brow like an afterthought)

in the stone called blood Man will see a tattooed head in a box of salt, clean as a wooden mallet  
at the bottom of a river

in the stone called stone Man will see a security camera filming his every move

Tape (Robotic Voice):

I know these things

for I have played the spy in the camp of Man

& have watched him grieve for a fortnight over lost vistas, & rise & exalt, mixing zinc, bismuth,  
& pyrite with an iridescent shovel.

Voice:

He remembers a ship which, with its steersman, went under water and did great damage to the  
enemy.

& He remembers a syphon used for quickly raising large quantities of water.

& He remembers a method that was used to lift weights by means of water and the above mentioned  
syphon.

& He remembers a method of constructing sluices where there is no fall of water, whereby ships can  
be raised to any required height within an hour or two.

& He remembers a machine that was driven by fire and ice.

& He remembers a drawbridge that was operated from within gates or walls.

& He remembers an air gun, a thousand of which were once discharged by the means of a single  
siphon.

& He remembers a musical instrument, with the airs marked on paper, which was played by one  
entirely unacquainted with music.

& He remembers a method of engraving on any kind of surface, by means of fire.

& He remembers a water horologue; which showed the motions of the heavenly bodies by the flow of  
water.

& He remembers a carriage which contained various mechanical contrivances set in motion  
when the carriage was drawn by horses.

& He remembers a flying vehicle, or the possibility of being sustained in the air, and being conveyed  
through it.

& He remembers a method of conjecturing the desires and affections of dancers by analysis.

Tape (Robotic Voice):

& Man remembers new methods of constructing tensions and springs.

*Puppet Psalm II: For Ventriloquist, Booming Chorus, & Percussion*

# Mans' lens worthy of Spinoza

splits starlight  
across his meat & bone

## behind his ribs

a thickened nerve  
called Theosophy  
a tumor  
called Moonlight  
a lesion called  
Origin, a tangle  
of disruptions called  
Ego, simply put

their purposeful maneuvering  
THEIR PURPOSEFUL MANEUVERING  
t,h,e,i,r p,u,r,p,o,s,e,f,u,l  
m,a,n,e,u,v,e,r,i,n,g

the sound  
a worm makes  
in a nut

[Drum & Cymbals]

+

\*

+

\*

+

\*

stuff of teeth & pearls  
burnt to lime  
stanzas, slogans

clearly the work of a century of slaves



below the scaffolding war machines  
practice by candle light  
where mad monks live  
(watch out!)  
next to the sky

time to erase the proceedings

**TIME TO ERASE THE PROCEEDINGS**

t,i,m,e t,o, e,r,a,s,e t,h,e, p,r,o,c,e,e,d,i,n,g,s

Man spins on one fleshless foot

skull  
ground down to a decimal point  
frozen flowers could be turned  
all directions  
inside it

**Selah.**

### *Puppet Psalm III: Cantata for Puppet Coitus*

Male & Female Voices:

YOU CAN HAVE ME ANYTIME YOU WANT ME, LOVE YA, X.  
YOU CAN HAVE ME ANYTIME YOU WANT ME, LOVE YA, X.  
YOU CAN HAVE ME ANYTIME YOU WANT ME, LOVE YA, X.  
YOU CAN HAVE ME ANYTIME YOU WANT ME, LOVE YA, X.  
YOU CAN HAVE ME ANYTIME YOU WANT ME, LOVE YA, X.  
YOU CAN HAVE ME ANYTIME YOU WANT ME, LOVE YA, X.

Female Voice:

Don't talk to me in that tone of Voice.  
Don't talk to me in that tone of Voice.  
Don't talk to me in that tone of Voice.  
Don't talk to me in that tone of Voice.  
Don't talk to me in that tone of Voice.

Male Voice:

That guy musta eat nervous pills.  
That guy musta eat nervous pills.  
That guy musta eat nervous pills.  
    The soul thrusts a wire through the flesh to animate this puppet of gristle.

Male & Female Voices:

& IF THE DEAD TALK WHAT THEY SAY IS USELESS TO US NOW.  
& IF THE DEAD TALK WHAT THEY SAY IS USELESS TO US NOW.  
& IF THE DEAD TALK WHAT THEY SAY IS USELESS TO US NOW.  
& IF THE DEAD TALK WHAT THEY SAY IS USELESS TO US NOW.  
& IF THE DEAD TALK WHAT THEY SAY IS USELESS TO US NOW.  
& IF THE DEAD TALK WHAT THEY SAY IS USELESS TO US NOW.

Female Voice:

& No more memories of muffled voices coming from the walls.  
& No more memories of muffled voices coming from the walls.  
& No more memories of muffled voices coming from the walls.  
& No more memories of muffled voices coming from the walls.  
& No more memories of muffled voices coming from the walls.

Male Voice:

To bind the black jaws of entropy.  
To bind the black jaws of entropy.  
To bind the black jaws of entropy.  
    We see the fangs embedded in the bone.

[Tape (Robotic Voice) Repeats above as background to below.]

Male Voice:

"The winged corpse grips me  
"w/ eagle talons  
"& it grips me  
"w/ the spurs of the flea  
"in Karma Sutric embrace  
"w/ a goat's jugular  
"it grips me  
"w/ the jaws of the candiru fish  
"lodged in the urethra of a beautiful woman  
"as she stands waist-deep & screaming in a muddy lagoon  
"& it grapples itself  
"to my broad, hod-carrier's shoulders  
"my workman's skeletal system  
"sways under the corpse's weight  
"as the building I was in today swayed to the hidden earthquake whose epicenter  
"was 400 miles away  
"O corpse w/ the face of a man  
"O corpse w/ the face of a woman  
"one half visible to the eyes of the living  
"the other visible to the eyes of the not-yet-born  
"you grow bloated with the Mistral  
"yr. skin is red as the worthless dirt of Carroll County  
"yr. whistling mouth is crammed with ivory & slate  
"yr. eyes distend from their sockets as you note, approvingly  
"tomorrow's genocides, murders, and injustices  
"yr. veins run black with Coca Cola  
"& now each wing is a bayonet waving at the sky  
"& now yr. gut is a swollen globe  
"wrapped in parchment  
"scrawled with anthropophagi & spouting Leviathans  
"& I bend near to find America  
"& I cannot

"though radiance  
"awaits us

"transfigured bodies  
"await us."

Tape (Robotic Voice):

"this is the voice of the torso in high weeds  
"& this is the voice of a woman staring into her hands  
"& this is the voice of a man who sleeps badly  
"choking on all the hate he feels  
  
"& I'm afraid says the torso in high weeds  
"& I'm afraid says the woman staring into her hands  
"& I'm afraid" says the man who sleeps badly  
"of all the hate I feel"  
"& I'm afraid says the girl w/ her face to the wall  
"& I'm afraid says the wooden-eyed boy

"& I'm afraid says the idiot savant now popular in every concert hall  
"& I'm afraid says the man whose heart is silting up

"that tomorrow  
"is most definitely  
"here--

"& there is nothing beyond the mud door  
"& there is nothing beyond the stone door  
"& there is nothing beyond the wooden door  
"& there is nothing beyond the bronze door  
"& there is nothing beyond the shimmering door of water  
"& there is nothing beyond the raven-feather door  
"& there is nothing beyond the door of living flesh  
"& there is nothing beyond the door of lacquered flames  
"& there is nothing  
"& there is nothing  
"& there is nothing."